

**PLANNING APPROVAL STAFF REPORT****Date: October 20, 2011****NAME**

The Wooden Boat Ministry

**LOCATION**360 Rapier Avenue  
(Northwest corner of Rapier Avenue and Texas Street)**CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT**

District 2

**PRESENT ZONING**

R-1, Single-Family Residential District

**AREA OF PROPERTY**

1 Lot / 0.1 ± Acre

**CONTEMPLATED USE**

Planning Approval to allow a boat building apprenticeship Christian ministry in an R-1, Single-Family Residential District.

**TIME SCHEDULE  
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Upon approval.

**ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

Must comply with all storm water and flood control ordinances. Any increase in impervious area in excess of 4,000 square feet will require detention. Any work performed in the right of way will require a right of way permit. Drainage from any dumpster pads cannot discharge to storm sewer; must have connection to sanitary sewer.

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

Driveway number, size, location, and design to be approved by Traffic Engineering and ALDOT and conform to AASHTO standards.

**URBAN FORESTRY  
COMMENTS**

Property to be developed in compliance with state and local laws that pertain to tree preservation and protection on both city and private properties (State Act 61-929 and City Code Chapters 57 and 64).

**FIRE DEPARTMENT  
COMMENTS**

All projects within the City of Mobile Fire Jurisdiction must comply with the requirements of the 2009 International Fire Code, as adopted by the City of Mobile.

**REMARKS**

The applicant is requesting Planning Approval to allow a boat building apprenticeship Christian ministry in an R-1, Single-Family Residential District.

Since the activity is church-sponsored, Planning Approval is required in an R-1 District. The actual use as a boat-building operation and vocational/trade school is the subject of a Use Variance request before the Board of Zoning Adjustment, as well as Parking Ratio and Landscaping and Tree Planting Variances.

The subject site pre-dates the Zoning Ordinance and was originally built as a neighborhood grocery/retail store and used for such and various other commercial purposes until losing its legal nonconforming commercial status in 1985. It was used as a furniture, antique and collectibles shop for a short period following the granting of a Use Variance in 2005. The applicant proposes to use the building primarily as a vocational/trade school for at-risk youth with instruction in building trades focusing on traditional wooden boat construction. Students would be in the program from a variety of scenarios including voluntary admittance, court ordering, or voluntary court option as an alternative to incarceration. Classes would be from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Friday, Saturday and Sunday until approximately 2012 when the operation would be Monday through Friday if further staff is obtained. Mornings would be devoted to classroom instruction and afternoons would be for working on boats. There would be no more than twelve students enrolled at a time. Standard woodworking hand and power tools would be employed and a dust collection vacuum system would serve the stationary power tools. It is also stated that there will be no spraying of paints or varnishes as all applications of such would be via brush or roller.

It is stated that vehicular traffic to the facility would consist of the instructor and student vehicles, possibly two trucks per month delivering supplies, and possibly two customers per week. As the site has no on-site parking, the Parking Ratio Variance is required and over-flow off-site parking is proposed at businesses on Government Street and Michigan Avenue (several blocks away), although an application for an Off-Site Parking Variance has not been submitted.

The review required for Planning Approval examines the applicant's location and site plan with regard to transportation, parking and access, public utilities and facilities, traffic congestion and hazard, and to determine if the proposal is in harmony with the orderly and appropriate development of the district.

It is very important to note that the Planning Approval review is site plan specific; therefore *any* future changes to the site plan or to the scope of operations for the church, as approved, by current or future applicants must be submitted for Planning Approval.

The subject site is embedded in an area where all active land uses are residential. As proposed, the project could create some parking congestion concerns and traffic congestion concerns when boats are moved into and out of the facility directly on the public right-of-way. But the primary concern is that this activity, although church-sponsored, is quite different from the norm of church activities within R-1 districts. Unlike congregational activities such as regular services, prayer meetings, and social functions, the proposed activity is centered on vocation and trades instruction and commercial building of boats. Albeit churches provide a high degree of leadership and guidance to at-risk youth in society within core residential neighborhoods, the proposed activity is outside of what is normally provided by a church and well beyond what would normally be found within a residential neighborhood. Although the program is very well-

intended, given the nature of the proposed students, the activity would be out of character with the residential neighborhood.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Planning Approval:** Based upon the preceding, this application is recommended for denial.

#### ***Revised for the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting:***

*This application was heldover from the August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to the September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting so that the following additional information could be provided by August 12, 2011:*

- 1) information regarding which sites will be used for off-site parking, and how much off-site parking will be provided;*
- 2) provision of a detailed scope of activities that will occur at the site which covers all activities proposed; and,*
- 3) to allow the applicant time to meet with residents of the neighborhood to discuss the proposed use.*

*The applicant subsequently submitted a letter requesting a holdover to the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.*

*As no new information has been presented to staff, the original recommendation for denial would stand.*

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Planning Approval:** Based upon the preceding, this application is recommended for denial.

#### ***Revised for the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:***

*This application was heldover from the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting at the applicant's request. Since then, the Board of Zoning Adjustment approved the applicant's requests for Use, Parking Ratio, and Landscaping and Tree Planting Variances at its meeting of October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The applicant has submitted a revised narrative addressing concerns presented by staff and Commission members at the previous meetings.*

*The applicant has secured a parking agreement with the City of Mobile Parks & Recreation Department to park vehicles at Crawford-Murphy Park, within approximately 560' of walking distance from the subject site. The park has 76 parking spaces that are available as space allows during regular business hours.*

*A detailed scope of operations was submitted covering academics, equipment to be used, and community projects and service. It generally portrays the proposed activities as beneficial toward the academic, vocational, and community-oriented skills development of the students proposed to be hosted by the Ministry.*

*Concerns about noise created by the proposed woodworking tools to be used was addressed via decibel meter tests conducted by an audio engineer technologist and all readings were found to be below the City's Noise Ordinance 85dB limit in residential areas between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM.*

*The applicant held a community meeting and explained the proposed operation and has canvassed the community and submitted a petition to staff with approximately 150 signatures in support of the proposed use.*

*Upon review of the revised information submitted to staff, and the fact that the Board of Zoning Adjustment has closely reviewed and approved the use, it becomes clearer that the proposed operation is one generally beneficial to the public as a whole, albeit a bit out of the normal scope of neighborhood church activities. The Commission should, therefore, consider the proposed activity for approval, subject to conditions.*

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

***Planning Approval:*** *Based upon the preceding, this application is recommended for approval, subject to the following conditions:*

- 1) providing two parking spaces at the site for instructors/mentors;*
- 2) subject to the Parking Agreement with the City of Mobile Parks and Recreation Department for parking at Crawford-Murphy Park;*
- 3) the scope of the operation is to be limited to that presented to staff in the revised narrative submitted; and*
- 4) compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.*

# LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 1 DATE October 20, 2011

APPLICANT The Wooden Boat Ministry

REQUEST Planning Approval



NTS

# PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



There are multi-family residential units to the north and east of the site,  
and single family residential units to the west and south.

APPLICATION NUMBER 1 DATE October 20, 2011

APPLICANT The Wooden Boat Ministry

REQUEST Planning Approval

LEGEND															
	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-A	R-B	H-B	T-B	B-1	LB-2	B-2	B-3	B-4	B-5	I-1	I-2





# PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



There are multi-family residential units to the north and east of the site,  
and single family residential units to the west and south.

APPLICATION NUMBER 1 DATE September 15, 2011

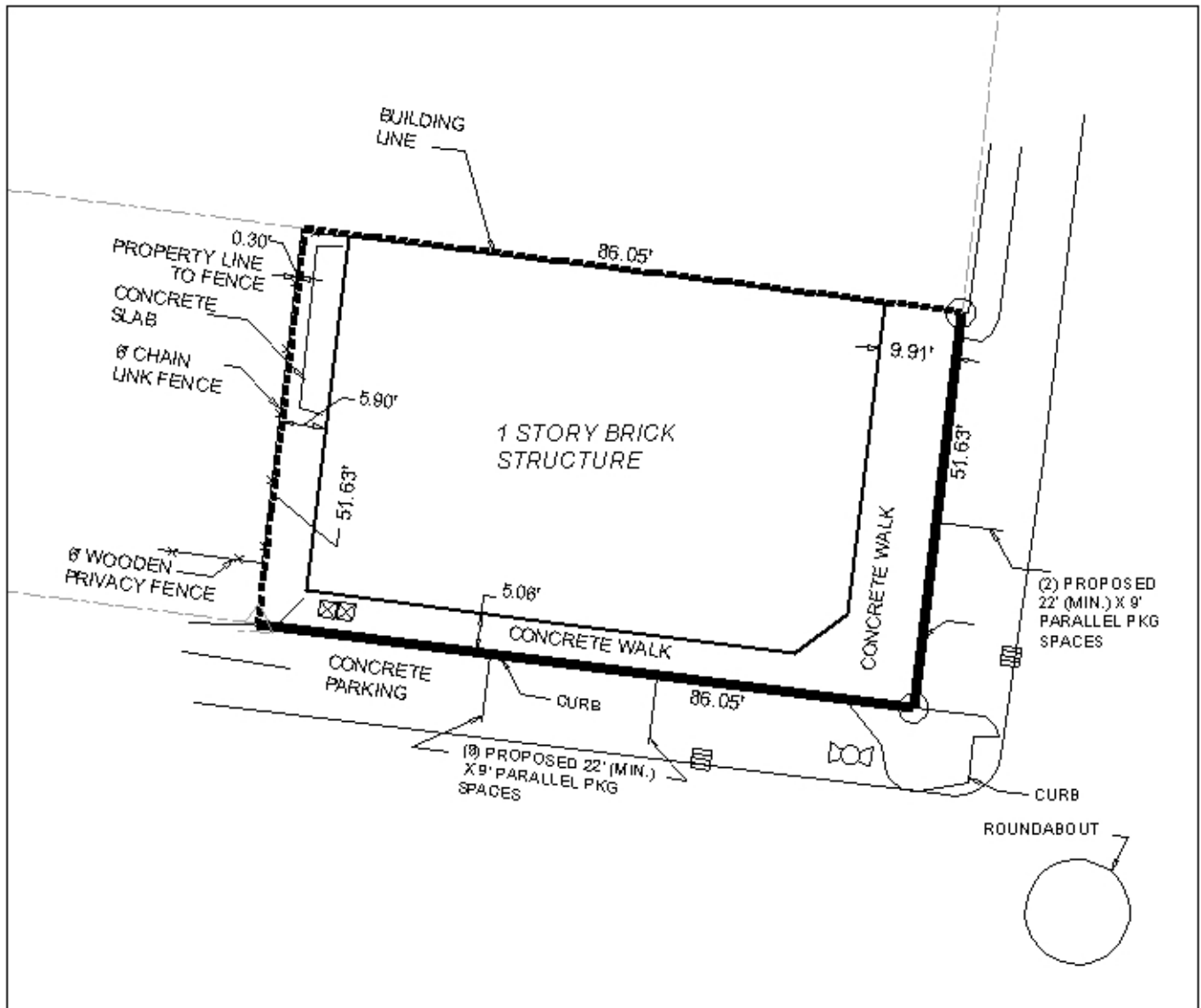
APPLICANT The Wooden Boat Ministry

REQUEST Planning Approval



NTS

# SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the existing building, parking, and fence.

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